



Physiotherapy In Knee Pain

If we follow one much known principle “Prevention is better than cure”, we can easily conquer the knee pain issue. Knee pain even on rest, stiffness in the knee after sitting for long, noticeable swelling around the knee joint and cracking noise from the joint; these are some of the issues for which, one should seek medical help.

What Is The Role Of Physiotherapy In Knee Pain?

- 1) Pain management: Basic muscle activation exercises, gentle stretches, joint mobilizations, electrotherapy techniques, Kinesio-taping etc are some of the very effective physiotherapy techniques to manage pain.
- 2) Prevention and reducing stiffness: Due to pain or some minor injuries, the movements gets restricted and then it eventually leads to tightness of surrounding muscles, ligaments. This result in stiffness in the joint experienced as inability or difficulty in folding the knee easily or walking with bend knee. Focused controlled stretching exercises along with strengthening can help to prevent and reduce stiffness.
- 3) Strengthening: Once the pain has come down and mobility has improved, it is recommended to continue progressive strengthening exercises to retain these effects. Strong muscles can keep your joint stable and absorbs unnecessary shocks. Even though these exercises are to be learned from a registered physiotherapist, you can remember some of the key points as follows:
 - One Should have 5-10 min warm up exercises in the beginning
 - Gradually increase the resistance. Do not rush.
 - Increasing the repetition is also important.
 - Reduce the break (rest) time between the two sets.
 - Do the prescribed exercises at least 4 times week.
 - Strength training is needed for hip and ankle joint as well not just knee. Also needs training to improve joint position sense which is reduced in a joint which has undergone wear and tear.

What Can I Do For My Painful Knee?

- Don't ignore the pain. Minor issue may turn into irreversible deformities.
- While starting any new physical activity or hobby such as running, sports etc; consider the body type, flexibility and the strain the activity will put up on the knee.
- Progress in your exercises gradually. Over excitement may lead to injury to the joint.
- Having a correct insole in your footwear also can alter the stress coming onto your joint.
- Taking a walking stick (or in some rare cases walker) can help you to reduce the stress on the joint.
- There are specialised knee braces (belts) available to off-load the knee joint from the stress of activities but do use it under guidance of your physiotherapist.
- Diet control to manage weight.

A 3 year long study on arthritis patients concluded that, those who followed strength training and had active lifestyle had less issues with arthritis compared to those who didn't. Exercise indirectly helps you to control arthritis by reducing weight.

How To Shift Towards "Active Lifestyle"?

- Make minor changes in your daily routine such as start walking everyday for about 20min. Use staircase whenever possible. Increase the activity gradually as tolerated.
- Keep changing the type of exercises every few weeks. Switch between activities like walking, cycling, yogasanas or walking in water.

Dr. Sona Kolke (PT)
TEAM Physiotherapy
Pune